

# SONNETS FROM HAFEZ

& other verses



BY

ELIZABETH BRIDGES

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## N O T E

THE last fifteen pieces in this book, which are founded on odes of Hafez, are not translations. Their aim is rather to convey if possible something of the original spirit than to give a faithful rendering of either thought or form; & I have not scrupled to omit, insert, alter or even deliberately to pervert the idea as fancy or feeling dictated. Some of the poems follow the Persian fairly closely (especially nos. 30, 31, 34, & 35); others are merely founded on or suggested by one or two couplets.

No. 4 was suggested by a Persian dialect quatrain by Baba Tahir.

The remainder are original.

E. B.

CHILSWELL,

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TO

A. A. D.



## I

WHEN sunlight faileth,  
& day's glow is gone;  
When chill mist traileth  
Where warm splendour shone;

When summer's pleasure  
Dieth,—dieth too  
The transient treasure  
That with life up-grew

& none may herit,  
Where then wilt thou turn,  
O vagrant spirit,  
That no home didst earn;

When none replieth  
Of thy friends so true,  
When sweet Joy crieth  
'Adieu, love, adieu!'

I CALLED to fading day  
 As o'er the hill she flew,  
 ' Whither, glad light, away ?  
 Take me, O take me too !'  
 She said, ' O wingless one,  
 Thou hast thy memoried sun '.

I said to the droop'd rose  
 Awhile that was so fair,  
 ' Why dost so swiftly lose,  
 Sweet grace, thy blooming air ?'  
 She said, ' This is my doom ;  
 Cherish thou beauty's tomb '.

I cried to Joy as late  
 I stood, bidding farewell,  
 ' Must this be too thy fate  
 Whom I have loved so well ?  
 He said, ' My gift I leave  
 With her whom I bereave '.



O YOUTH'S young cloudlet, O freshness free,  
With heart so light on the winds to fly  
Or glisten in spray up-scatter'd,—I  
Am sad as the full surgings of the sea ;  
I gave thee birth, thou shalt return to me.

Thy heart is light as the empty wind  
Of barren purposeless change,—but I  
Am the thought-burden'd slow-searching mind :  
I am the agony to form & find ;—  
The fluxing travail of eternity.

WEND I, wander I, past all worlds that be ;  
 Ever have I wander'd or e'er the earth was made ;  
 Urg'd like the álien áir o'er land & sea,  
 Sleepless as sunlight, joyless as its shade.

Not on your earth travel I ; sáy not to mé  
 'Cease awhile thy wandering, Ó tir'd day !'  
 Say not, 'O pilgrim, rest thee ; comfort thee '  
 Not hére is my journey's end, Indus nor Cathay.

## ON A HILL

EYES that o'er the landscape fly,  
Over dale & wood & stream  
To the cloud-realms of the sky ;

Eyes that wander still & dream,  
Hopes that ever forward press  
Seeking lovelier loveliness ;

All the world is yours to roam  
—Searching eye & swiftling thought—  
Nowhere can ye make your home ;

Not where peace so vainly sought  
Bower'd in the valley lies,  
Nor content's small villages ;

Nor can pleasure's garish dress  
Tempt you to a mean caress  
—Thoughts that will not rest nor stay—

Ever do ye tell her nay ;  
Still ye wander—' Where, O say,  
Lies our vision'd loveliness ?'

## AFTER MUSIC

O WHAT availeth thee thy melting mood,  
Thine ecstasy  
When once again thy thralldoms o'er thee brood :

& what doth profit thee thy courage high,  
& strength so fain ;  
So soon agen thy coward heart shall fly ?

For more & stronger strife our strength shall strain,  
Though hope's best good  
Be but this hope : to strive, & strive again.

ALL things born to break  
In meek sacrifice  
For another's sake,

All man's striving vain,  
Lavish'd as the price  
Of the heart's hid pain—

Long, O spirit-bird,  
Of thy lonely fear  
Hast thou sung unheard

In hope's moon-lit wood,  
While no creature near  
Knew nor understood.

If there be any power in passion's prayer—  
 But no : such ultimate longings have no word :  
 There is no eloquence in last despair.

Many have voiced their pain & answer heard ;  
 Though 'twere but this, that to give bodied form  
 To grief, call'd their own heart to combat it :  
 But not ev'n thus can I pray ;—thou strong storm,  
 All-overpowering, baffling bravest wit,  
 Wild spirit spurning cage of time or name,  
 Furious intangible fire, no duteous thought  
 Can deal with thee, to no calm altar-flame  
 Confine, nor wish acceptable,—O if aught

From such dumb need can reach aught's hearing ear,  
 This is it now, O hear, O hear, O hear !

In love's great ocean, whose calm-shelter'd shore  
 Must he for ever leave, whose soul is bound  
 On farthest quest, life's wonders to explore—

That mightiest flood, all-whelming, torment-toss'd,  
 Wherein must ev'ry lover's self be lost  
 Ere the Belovéd's lovelier self be found—

Think not, O searcher, in that sea to find  
 Food for thine earth-born strength & lustful show,  
 Nor glorious pearl to deck thy worldly mind,

Nor isle of ease ; all such doth he forego  
 Who, recking nought of hurt to pride or limb,  
 Hark'neth to love's unchallengeable call :

Yea, who would venture, no help is for him  
 Save whole surrender ; health, strength, life & all.

WHEN sorrow hath outsoar'd our nature's clime,  
 Leaving it far remote &, like a strong  
 Eagle lone brooding on her peak sublime,  
 Graspeth in solitude her towering wrong;

& no more hankereth for petty prey  
 Nor bleeding victim wherewithal to still  
 Her hunger of desolate passion, but thus aye  
 Sitteth, devour'd by her own vital ill,

Motionless, nerveless, where for her no sound  
 Of life is, only the wind's alien  
 Moan that meandereth sleeplessly around  
 The promontory,—what saviour can then

Help helpless sorrow? What shall break that spell  
 Of icy death in life, that shackling Hell?



O GENTLE weariness,  
 Thine is the power that can all spirits free  
 From bonding trouble, thou art a goddess  
 To all the suffering slaves of misery.

Thy sanctuary  
 No suppliant vainly seeketh ; wheresoe'er  
 Desperate grief is, then unfailingly  
 Is thine all-hallowing rest & refuge there.

Our sorrow hath outgrown  
 Solace, yet still in thine all-mothering hand  
 Is balm of soft oblivion, who alone  
 Our never-ending needs dost understand.

PEACE, for whose presence did we erewhile call  
With cry sincere, vowing (God knoweth, those  
Prótests how passionate were) to love thee all,  
Yet when thou camest, pander'd to thy foes  
Weaklier than ever, now again the throes  
Convulse our being ; now, Peace, may'st thou see,  
This lust-devoted land is not for thee.

Farewell ! Small wonder is it if thou flee  
Such faithlessness, yet doth thy memory still  
Dwell in each place where thou hast walked with me,  
In dawn's fresh mead or by noon's shady rill,  
Or when cool evening wafteth, on our hill ;  
Allwheres that beauty's comfort-laden breath  
Sootheth tired sorrow till it slumbereth.

## SONG

BEAUTY is a waving tree,  
 Beauty is a flower,  
 Beauty is a grassy lea  
 & a shady bower,  
 Beauty is the verdant Spring  
 In our hearts awakening.

Beauty is a summer sun  
 Warming all the land,  
 Whose full bounty doth o'errun  
 More than our demand ;  
 Spreadeth Beauty her kind feast  
 Lavishly for man & beast.

Autumn's quiet hast thou too,  
 Beauty, who canst feed  
 Every craving, known or new  
 Of the spirit's need,  
 Laying up a lasting store  
 Of ripe bliss for evermore.

O true Beauty, though joy's vain  
 Seasons come & go,  
 Thou a refuge dost remain  
 From all wintry woe,  
 Thou art still the perfect clime  
 Where no transience is nor time.

WHERESOEVER beauty flies,  
Follow her on eager wings  
Beauteous wild imaginings.

Wheresoever she may tread,  
Lovely vivid flowers arise,  
Springing swift as thoughts unsaid.

Living beauty, more than wise,  
Fair art thou to living eyes,  
Though less fair than is the dead  
Myrtle-wreath that more we prize;

Relic of the one dear head  
That for each it garlanded.

WHEN first to earth thy gentle spirit came  
 From some soft climate of Elysian field,  
 Garmented in its own ethereal flame ;

When first from heav'n's high peace it enter'd here,  
 No armour had it then, nor guarding shield,  
 Nor sword for safety, nor attacking spear,  
 No pang'd misgivings suffered it, nor fear,  
 Seeing in every face its own sweet face,  
 Smiling to treachery with trustful eyes,  
 Finding in nature its own nature's grace :  
 —So Adam in his vision'd Paradise  
 Saw but God's gifts, till taste of bitter ruth  
 Taught him what earth's creation is in truth : —

Now, O stern angel, none can make relent  
 Thy steely wrath, thy sword of punishment.

FOR sake of these two splendours do the wise  
 Set store on riches, & for these alone :  
 For these two glories only do they prize  
 Power & majesty of kingly throne :

Or this : to succour friendship in distress,  
 To comfort humble sorrow, nor despise  
 To cheer the joyless heart of weariness,  
 To guard & aid whom fortune doth oppress  
 That he to life's glad kingdom be restor'd  
 (& thus their monument of thanks they raise  
 More high than pomp's vain pinnacle of praise),

Or this : to forge therefrom a trenchant sword  
 Whereat shall poltroon evil cower & fly,  
 & smite Hell's fiends of foulness that they die.

SHE hath not beauty, that ill-fortun'd gem  
 Wherewith may women dazzle men's meek eyes  
 Ere they enslave, un-man & slaughter them.

Nor doth she vaunt afar her heart's hid prize,  
 Nor with wide-lavish'd scent of hope allure  
 Ere men behold her, nor with rich disguise.

Nor hath she wit, that sword wherewith to smart  
 Delicate souls, with flashing stroke unsure  
 Of sharp misprise, wounding some gentle heart.

Yet not unlovely she, my silent rose,  
 That only may to true love's eyes uncloze,  
 Nor yet doth stintingly her smiles impart;

—But should bold evil venture, O what proud  
 Pitilessness hath she then, what anger loud!

WHEN thou art gone, & when are gone all those  
 That knew thee & that loved thy living grace,  
 Merged in the formless flood whence all arose,

When thou hast passed, & of thy life no trace  
 Remaineth, nor remembrancer to say  
 ' Such was he, such his form, his voice, his face ',

In that new time shall rise, untouched by thee,  
 The eddying circles still, & pass away ;  
 Full many a spring shall turn to winter dree,  
 & morn to nightfall, & life's human day  
 Shall change from youth's bright hope to darkling pain,  
 When thy young life in life's hard war is slain,

When thou art gone, & I, & our strong love  
 Which now Time's change doth but more changeless prove.



## A YOUTH

PLAY thou on men as on a hárp's stríng :  
Though of themselves they lifeless are  
In them thy spirit's music shall ring.

Breathe thou in them as through a reed  
Thy soul's strong message, through them declare  
To the dead world thy living need.

They are to thee as the senseless words  
That embody thought's full-felt commands ;  
Thy passive tools, obedient hands  
To serve thy purpose, thy trusty swords :  
They shall thy beauteous will express  
Though they be graceless & purposeless.

Yea, live thou in men as their life's will,  
So long as life is, & good & ill.

Go, book : go, vessel laden with the mind  
 That builded thee, go now & bear thy freight  
 Of man's old messaging to all mankind.

Say first :—Such oft-told things as I relate,  
 Such pond'rous words strung on unperish'd thought,  
 Such pearly praises worn by countless queens,  
 Such temper'd swords wherewith heroes have fought,  
 Such sceptres that have ruled all earth's demesnes,  
 Such broider'd robes, such antique jewelry,  
 Such orbs, such thrones, such treasures (say thou then)  
 These the rich heritage of poesy  
 Are as wealth's burden is to untaught men ;

Life's costly crowns that but disaster bring,  
 To who is not in spirit born a king.

## ATTAINMENT

WHEN the strong climber his last mountain-crest  
Attaineth, & the point for which he strove  
Is reached, & his desire made manifest,

& seating him the topmost heights above  
He gazeth on each aspect leisurely,  
Considering the path by which he clomb

& which so many attempted, & how he  
The first of all his race had strength to come  
Unto that eminence, & how this throne

Shall men hereafter to his name recall;  
Then more than ever is he strangely lone,  
Seeing earth's dwellings spread out far & small;

& more unfathom'd seemeth & more high,  
Eternal heaven's unchanged immensity.

SINCE neither man's proud pomp & kingly name  
Endureth, nor his monumental throne,  
Nor honour'd shrine, nor pinnacle of fame ;

Since borne in agony to life he came  
& in pain too he passeth, one by one  
His joys desert him, friendless & alone,

Yea since all lov'd delights their cycles range,  
All to their parent elements return,  
Air to air, dust to dust,—when Thy Life's breath,

The fire of Thine inscrutable Will them burn,  
Scattering, destroying,—yea since finisheth  
All things, or death, or marring grief, or change ;

Since this is, this must needs Thy purpose be,  
Through such dark doors to win Thy works to Thee.

PURENESS of pale moon, liveness of far skies,  
 Splendour of starry regions & bright sun,  
 Grandeur of universal vastnesses,

Sweetness of flower, staunchness of stalwart tree,  
 Delicacy of small verdures ev'ry one,  
 Loveliness of all lowly forms that be,

Gladness of ev'ry bird that gaily sings,  
 Ardour of eager beasts that hunt & kill,  
 Rapture of all life-raptur'd living things ;

Yea man's one rapture too & his life's joy,  
 His strength, his beauty & his living will,  
 Each soul's will to create & to destroy,—

O thou who visitest these dwellings, why  
 Thus deignest thou, who art so great & high ?



# VERSES AFTER HAFEZ

## DAWN

I SAW fair Fortune, one clear morning, touch  
 Like the bright-sceptred sun's first point of scorn,  
 With slightest finger my full-ripen'd corn.

I glimps'd her beauty : slender was she, such  
 As the moon's waning sickle, paled afar,  
 Or dawn's faint star-sheaves that scarce vision'd are.

I said, 'O my life's crowning queen, for thee  
 Have I long toiled without repose or rest ;  
 In hope of thee, my harvest heavenly,  
 Labour'd & waited, still thou lingerest,  
 Tryest me still'—She turning smil'd & said,  
 'Though this be, be not thou uncomforted :

Lo now already thy night-ending sun  
 In world-seen splendour hath his day begun'.



COME let us drink & deeply drown  
 In Heav'n's pure wine our sorrowing!  
 Fling ye earth's faded garlands down,  
 Scatter away life's flowering!

Though sorrow's myriad armies strive  
 To subjugate & slay us, we,  
 O proud cup-bearer, will contrive  
 To overcome their tyranny.

O earth's sad lover, drink & throw  
 Unto high heaven thy misery:  
 So shall perchance bright beauty know  
 Thy longing need & bend to thee.

Not in this life's sad city grow  
 Immortal flowers: O friends, arise!  
 Drink we the wine of truth & go  
 To deathless joys of Paradise.

ONCE more, O happy hill & peaceful plain,  
Once more, O kindly meadow, laugh with glee :  
Now is all earth's old nature young again.

Once more the lily may her lover see ;  
Once more the eager tulip lifteth up  
Unto the wine-filled rose her golden cup.

O hold thou dear the flowers, that through Spring's door  
Enter thy garden : ere thou may'st no more  
Behold them, love them who live but for thee.

Greet them, ere they through Autumn's gate depart :  
Since for thy pleasuring God made them be,  
Gaze on them gladly,—on me too, sweet heart,

Who for thy sake alone live ; give me one  
Welcome, once smile on me, ere I be gone.

TELL me not, mournful Preacher, that to prize  
 Beauty of flower or song or mistress fair,  
 Is to forgo the sweets of Paradise.

Say not, ' Life's pleasance is a deathly snare :  
 Shun it, so would'st thou save thy soul alive ;  
 Blind thee, & in drear temple pray & strive '.

Know thou, all gladness is God's house of grace ;  
 All loveliness is thy Belovéd's face ;  
 All beauteous earth is Heav'n's gay garden-ground.

To love the rose, the fair, the gladsome bird,  
 Life's lovely bliss, wherever it be found,  
 To love love's truth from whomsoever heard,

This is their faith, who see with seeing eyes,  
 Their worship & their endless Paradise.

WHAT madness 'twas, I know not, that thus enchanted me ,  
 What wine, nor who the bringer, nor wherefore enter'd he.

—Lament no more, O full heart, thy love so close confin'd !  
 O rosebud, ope thy glory, thy beauty nought shall bind !

Behold the flower-fill'd meadows ; thou too, O wistful Dear,  
 Take in thine hand the goblet, & lend to me thine ear !

Lo, for our wintry sorrow I hold the certain cure !  
 Lo, stern fate kneels before us ! Lo, rapture evermore !

—What madness 'twas I know not, that thus entrancéd me ;  
 What wine, nor who the bearer, nor whither vanished he.

SHE went.--O whither too, O one true love,  
 Went my sad heart, thou knowest. Lo my prayer  
 Followeth thee, & faith that nought may move.

With prayer I came, & now with pleading strong  
 I leave thee, that my flinchless trust thou share;  
 So shall God aid us, who to him belong.

Though all earth censure me, by Heaven I swear,  
 Though tyranny me test with trial untold,  
 No torments shall enwaver me, nor fear.

Though pleasure her most dazzling joys forth hold,  
 & luring musics to enravish me,  
 Thee only see I, thee hear, only thee

I follow :-- thou who trav'lest love's long road  
 Knowest that there no rest is, nor abode.

I SAID, 'O heavenly Leader, O truth's day,  
Guide thou this wanderer'. He said, 'In quest  
Of his own pleasure did thy wand'rer stray'.

I pleaded, 'Bide with me'. He answer'd, 'Nay,  
Unmeet were thy cold couch & cheerless rest  
For me, soft-nurtur'd : vain is thy request.

The royal-born, how hardly may endure  
After pomp's luxury & silk array,  
Thy mean provisioning, thy dwelling poor'.

Again I prayed, 'O all life's Sun, O true  
Light-giver, to our darkling earth return'.  
He said, 'Pray not thus : since not ev'n my few

Dare to behold me, strange 'twere not, nor new,  
That a poor wand'rer's wilder'd heart should burn'.

WHERE is the pious doer ? & I the estray'd one, where ?  
Behold how far the distance, from his safe home to here !

Dark is the stony desert, trackless & vast & dim,  
Where is hope's guiding lantern ? Where is faith's star so  
fair ?

My heart fled from the cloister, & chant of monkish hymn,  
What can avail me sainthood, fasting & punctual prayer ?

What is the truth shall light me to heav'n's strait thorough-  
fare ?  
Whither, O heart, thus hastest ? Arrest thee & beware !

See what a lone adventure is thine unending quest !  
Fraught with what deadly danger ! Set with what unseen  
snare !

Say not, O friend, to Hafez, ' Quiet thee now & rest !'  
Calm & content, what are they ? Patience & peace, O  
where ?

I SAID, 'Thou knowest, O all-knowing Friend,  
My trouble for thee'. He said 'Speak not so :  
Thy sorrow came ; thy sorrow too shall go'.

I said, ' O light of Truth, when wilt thou spend  
Thy radiance ?' Answer heard I, 'It may be  
This will not always be denied to thee'.

I said, ' O Merciful, when wilt to me  
Show mercy ?' He replied 'Till that time is  
Endure thou patiently my tyrannies'.

I said again, ' All-seeing, who dost see  
How long is pain, behold'st thou not then too  
How short sweet joy was ?'—Answer'd he anew,

' Be not thus comfortless, but comprehend :  
Ev'n as thy joys, thy sorrows too shall end.'



33

MY heart the chamber of His musing is,  
Mine eye the mirror of His beauty's face,  
My hand the servant of His purposes.

I, who to neither wealth nor worldly place  
Incline, nor to religion's promised ease,  
Bend low beneath the burden of His grace.

Since all I have is of His bounty given,  
So is my poor pride but in His proud name,  
His humble service is my hoped-for Heaven.

Nor shun I men's despite & trampling sneer,  
Nor heed their slander, nor the infamous fame  
Of their blind censure ; nay nor do I fear

Death's last defilement : though I pass in shame,  
Bright worlds His immortality proclaim.

FAIR is the leisure of life's garden-ground :  
 Pleasant is friendship's voice & mirth's soft sound.

Sweet are the perfumed flowers ; yea, yea, what bliss  
 Sootheth like hope's fresh scent of loveliness ?

Lovely, O nightingale, is thy lament ;  
 Ever to listening love thy plaint is dear ;  
 In the fond thought of love thy life is spent.

Though in this world joy's goal is but a name,  
 Fair is thy fadeless hope, blest wanderer,  
 Beauteous its gentle fire & flickering flame.

From the pure lily heard I this clear song :  
 ' Happy their peaceful life who work no wrong ;

Sweet idle flowers, whom heav'n's sweet airs do kiss ;  
 No conqu'ring king hath joy more fair than this '.

THUS spake at dawn to the fresh-open'd rose  
 The courting bird, 'Cease thy so empty vaunt :  
 Comelier than thou full many each day unclose'.

She laughed :—' In truth I care not, ne'ertheless  
 Strange lover thou, to use such harsh address :  
 No gallant vexeth beauty with such taunt.

Or ever thou receive this ruby red,  
 This wine, first must thy pearl'd disdainfulness  
 In passion's suppliant sea its jewels shed.'

O vain it were love's chanting voice to chide !  
 Though may no tongue those burning thoughts expound,  
 The ardent fire of love no heart can hide.

In his all-whelming tears hath Hafez drowned  
 Wisdom & patience, yet no peace hath found.

THOUGH beauty's tress be strayed, 'tis beauteous still :  
 Though her bright glance should wander, though it err  
 & wound me, it shall be forgiven her ;  
 Yea, lov'd is the Belovéd though she kill.

Though should love's light'ning ravage & consume  
 Faith's harvest, & the garner of the wise,  
 Reproach not nor upbraid her : those bright eyes  
 Have right all to destroy, that all illumc.

Betwixt love's roses should no sharpness be :  
 Though not uncruel, not unblameworthy  
 Wast thou, O sweet Love, blame thou only my  
 Blemish, let not remorse endolour thee.

Yea, censure not afflicting love : thy part  
 Is but forgiveness, O long-patient heart !

ARISE, O cup-bearer, & bring  
 Fresh wine for our enrapturing !  
 O minstrel, of our sorrow sing—  
 O joy of whose delight we dreamed,  
 O love that erst so easy seemed,  
 What toil is in thy travelling ! '

How in the lov'd one's tent can I  
 Have any rest or gaiety ?  
 Ever anon the horsemen cry,  
 ' O lingering lover, fare thee well ! '  
 Ever I hear the jingling bell  
 Of waiting steed & harnessry.

O seeker who wouldst surely bring  
 To happy end thy wandering,  
 O learner who wouldst truly know,  
 Let not earth's loves arrest thee. Go !  
 Mad thee with heaven's pure wine & fling  
 To those clear skies thy rapturing.

OUR toil is He, & eke our journey's end ;  
 Our life-long ailment & our remedy,  
 Our foeman & our ever-pitying friend ;

Who is more vanquishing than victory,  
 Fairer than beauty, more belov'd than life ;  
 'This is he who our peace is & our strife.

Our strenuous earth is He & eke our Heaven,  
 The crown of conquest & the armour riven,  
 The strength, the struggle, yea, the failing even.

Of Him all is, & unto Him also  
 Doth all return : torment & yearning woe  
 Surely shall pass, even as pleasures go.

Yea, all have end, beggar & bountied king,  
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Arise, O cup-bearer, & bring . . .	37
Our toil is He, & eke our journey's end . . .	38